

Together for Tomorrow

Service Partnerships to Boost Attendance



Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 



**TOGETHER FOR
TOMORROW**

TFT.challenge.gov

- The Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge invites schools, national service programs, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations to work together to propel improvement of our lowest-performing schools.

School & Student Needs

	Targeted needs	Whole school needs
Attendance	<i>ex: Need special assistance to improve attendance of chronically absent students (absent 10% or more of days of school.)</i>	<i>ex: Need to make coming to school more welcoming for all of our students.</i>
Behavior	<i>ex: Need assistance for students that are in in-school suspension.</i>	<i>ex: Need incentives to provide to students for the positive behavior intervention system.</i>
Course performance	<i>ex: Need personalized academic assistance for the students that are 2 or more grade levels behind in reading.</i>	<i>ex: Need project-based learning opportunities in math and science that connect the classroom to real-world challenges.</i>
College access	<i>ex: Need help filling out the FAFSA for high school seniors and their families that have not yet completed it.</i>	<i>ex: Need all students to better understand the options for post-secondary education that are available in their own communities.</i>

Service Activities & Community Resources

	Targeted services/resources	Whole school services/resources	Existing or planned?
Attendance	<i>ex: Home visits for chronically absent students (absent >10% days) to help families resolve issues that are impeding attendance.</i>	<i>ex: Greeting students as they arrive at school so the first thing they see is a friendly face with a positive welcome.</i>	
Behavior	<i>ex: Classroom coaches to assist teachers with conducting in-school suspension.</i>	<i>ex: Hosting an social event for all students that meet behavior goals during the month.</i>	
Course performance	<i>ex: Assisting with volunteers for afterschool and summer tutoring programs.</i>	<i>ex: Leading service projects that link water testing in community streams to the core science curriculum.</i>	
College access	<i>ex: Helping low-income families complete tax returns so they can apply for student financial aid.</i>	<i>ex: Organizing a college fair at the school.</i>	



Hedy Chang



Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence



Unpacking Attendance Terms

Average Daily Attendance

- **Definition:** The % of enrolled students who attend school each day
- **Answers:** What resources are needed to serve typical number of students who show up to school?

Truancy

- **Definition:** Typically refers only to unexcused absences and is defined by each state and sometimes locality.
- **Answers:** How many/which students are skipping school and breaking compulsory attendance laws?

Chronic Absence

- **Definition:** Missing 10% or more of school for any reason – excuse, unexcused, etc.
- **Answers:** How many and which students are missing so much school they are academically at risk? Do we need to improve attendance in order to raise achievement?



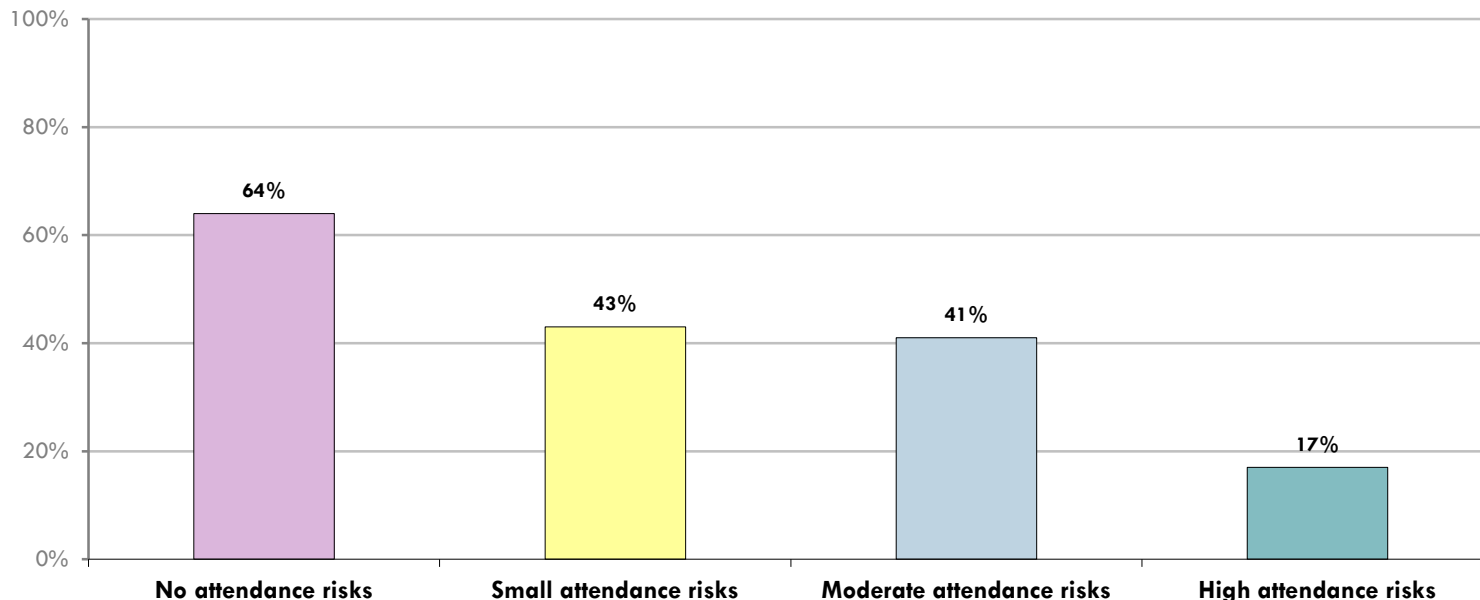
Chronic Absence is a National Crisis

- ❑ Nationwide, as many as 7.5 million students miss nearly a month of school every year. That's 135 million days of lost time in the classroom.
- ❑ In some cities, as many as one in four students are missing that much school.
- ❑ Chronic absenteeism is a red alert that students are headed for academic trouble and eventually for dropping out of high school.
- ❑ Poor attendance isn't just a problem in high school. It can start as early as kindergarten.



Students Chronically Absent in Kindergarten & 1st Grade Much Less Likely to Read Proficiently in 3rd Grade

Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and 1st Grade Attendance



No risk	Missed less than 5% of school in K & 1 st t
Small risk	Missed 5-9% of days in both K & 1 st
Moderate risk	5-9% of days absent in 1 year & 10 % in 1 year
High risk	Missed 10% or more in K & 1 st

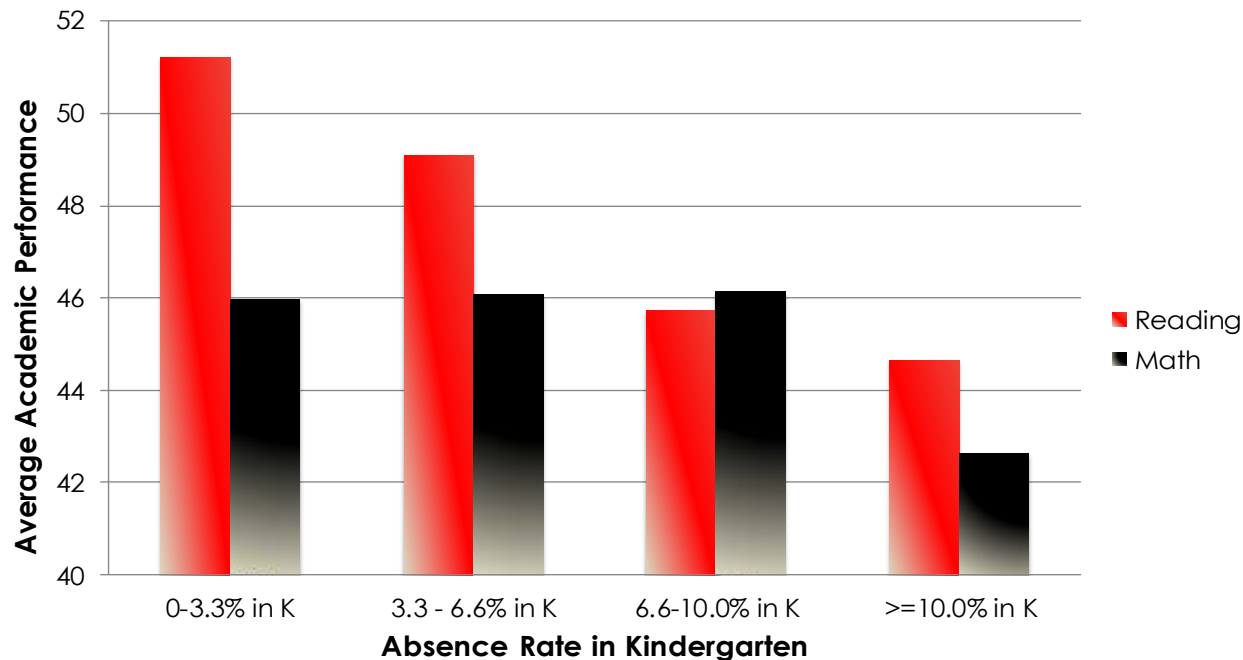
Source: Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011)



The Chronic Early Absence Is Most Troubling for Poor Children

Chronic K Absence predicted lower 5th grade performance even for if attendance had improved in 3rd grade.

5th Grade Math and Reading Performance By K Attendance

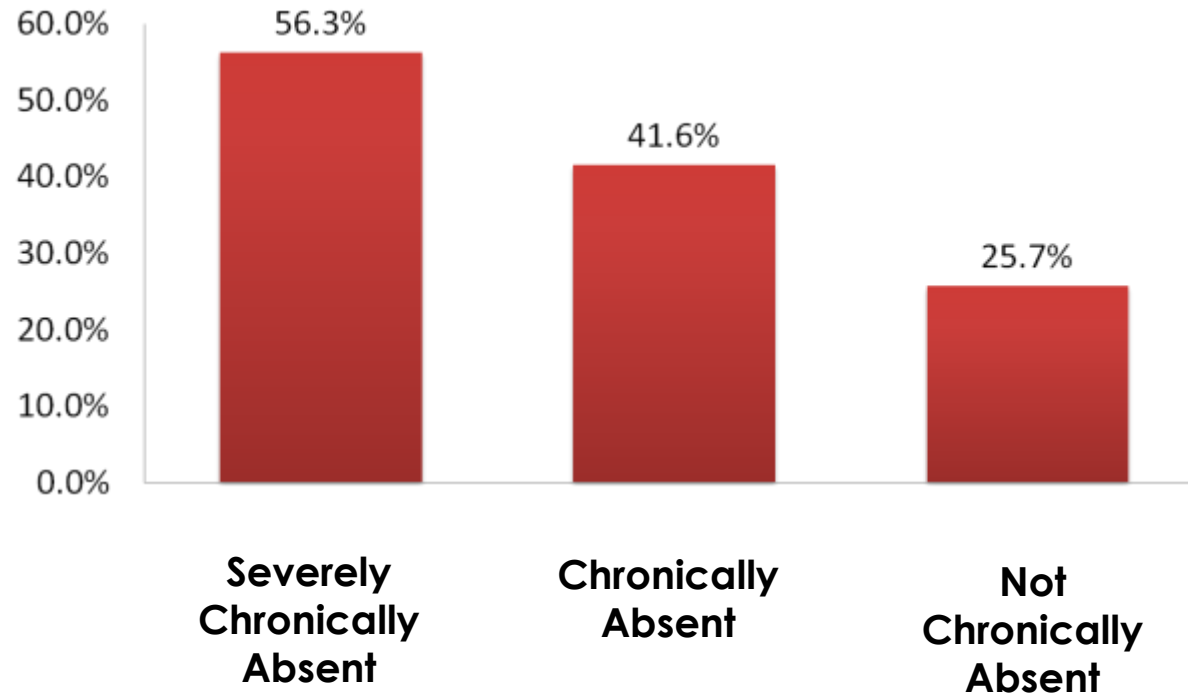


Source: ECLS-K data analyzed by National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)
Note: Average academic performance reflects results of direct cognitive assessments conducted for ECLS-K.



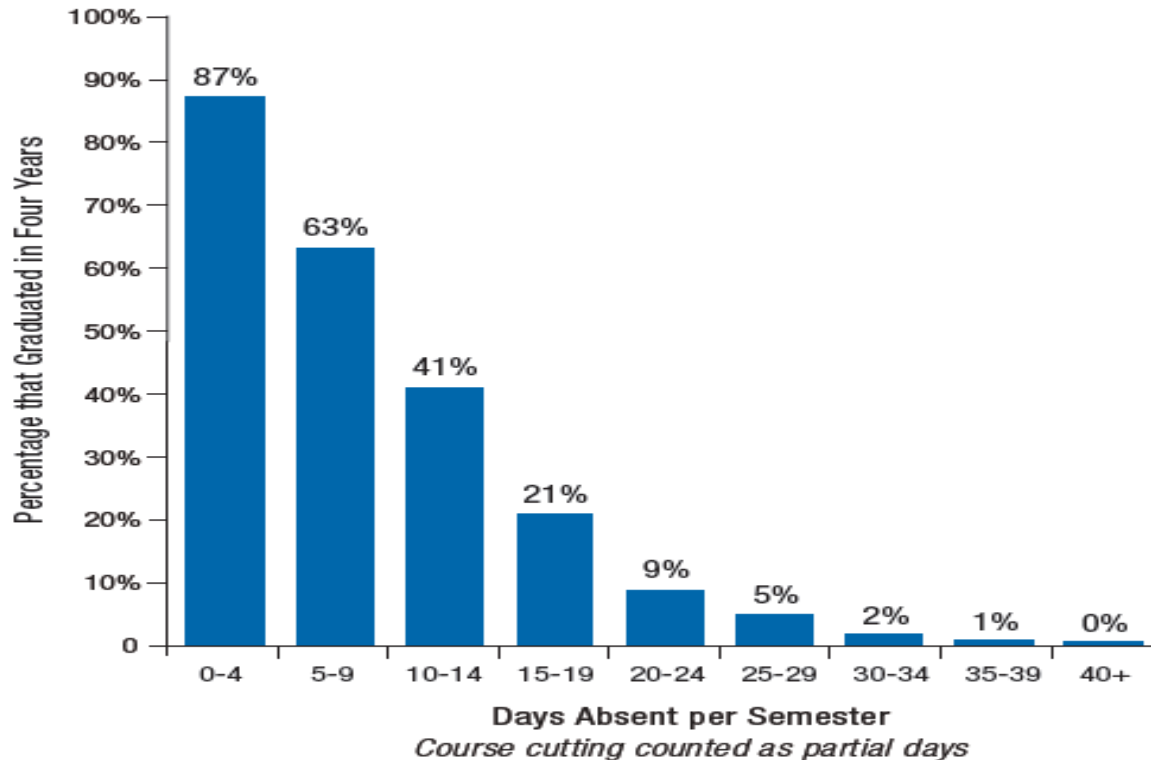
Chronically Absent 6th Graders Have Lower Graduation Rates

Dropout Rates by Sixth Grade Attendance
(Baltimore City Public Schools, 1990-00 Sixth Grade Cohort)





9th Grade Attendance Predicts Graduation for Students of All Economic Backgrounds

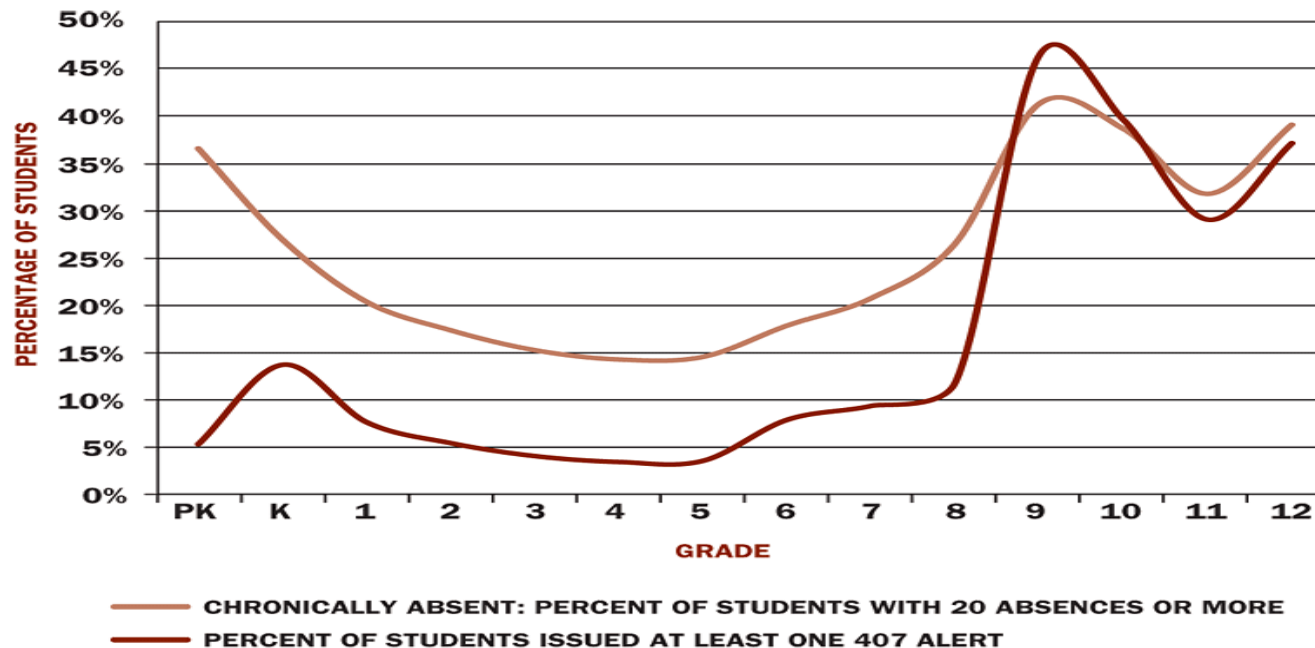


Note: This Chicago study found attendance was a stronger graduation predictor than 8th grade test scores.



Sporadic — Not Just Consecutive — Absences Matter

New York City Schools



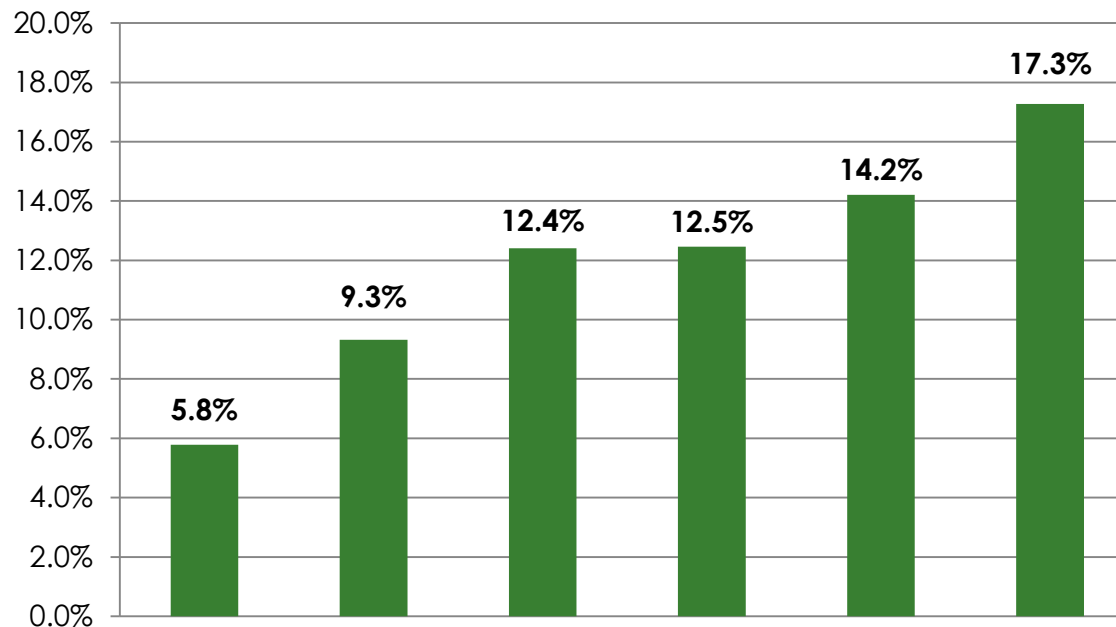
A 407 alert is issued when student misses 10 consecutive days or 20 days over a 40 day period. It misses more sporadic absence.
1 out of 5 elementary school children were chronically absent.



Moving into Action Requires Knowing If Chronic Absence is a Problem

Most Schools Only Track Average Daily Attendance and Truancy. Both Can Mask Chronic Absence.

Variation in Chronic Absence for Schools with 95% ADA in Oakland, CA

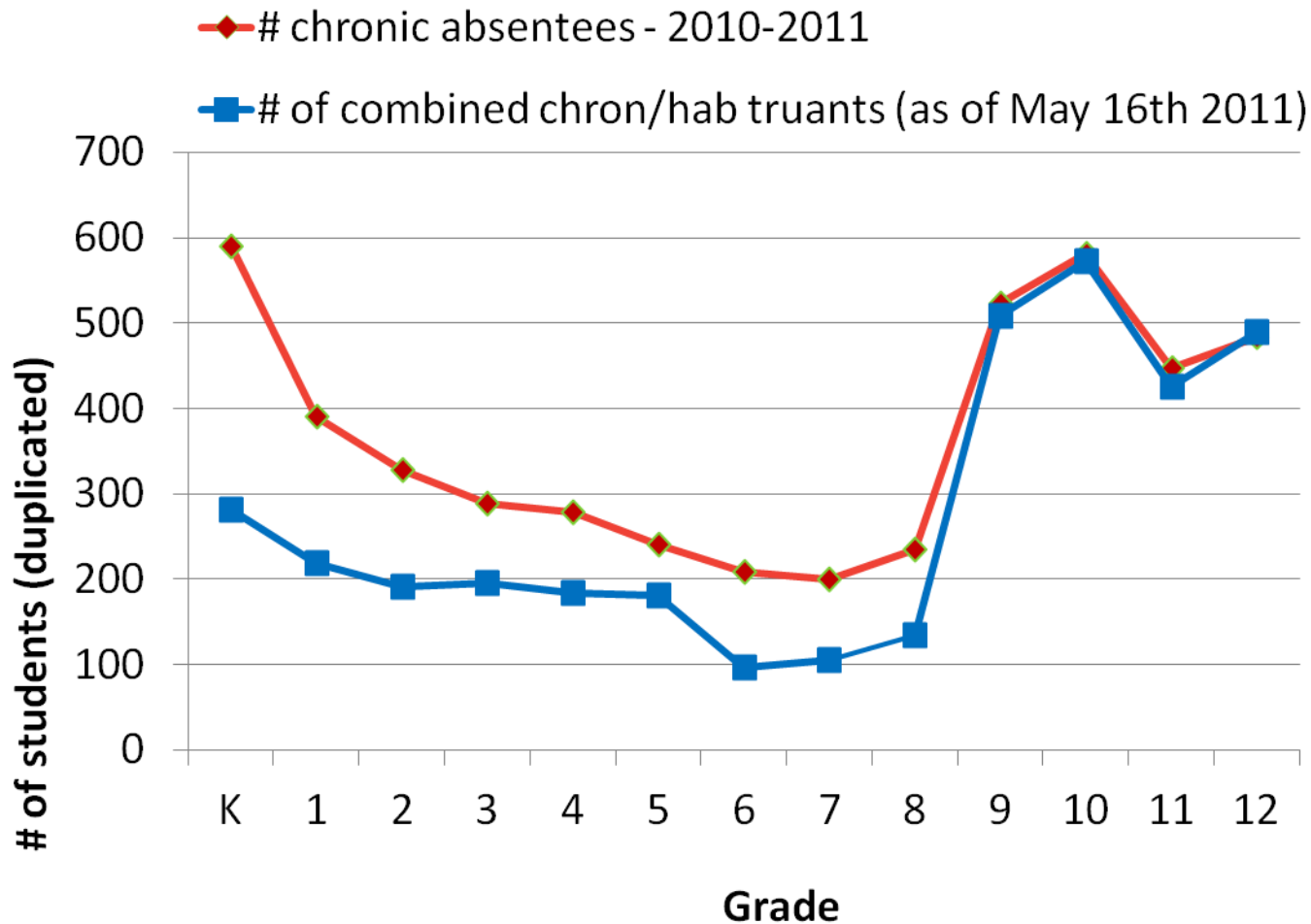


**98% ADA = little chronic absence, 95%ADA = don't know;
93% ADA = significant chronic absence**



Chronic Absence Versus Truancy

(San Francisco Unified School District)





Data is Needed for Accountability, Intervention & Programmatic Solutions

- ☐ Chronic absence data (as well as other attendance measures) should be examined by classroom, grade, school, neighborhood or sub-population.
- ☐ If chronic absence is unusually high for a particular group of students, explore what might be common issues (unreliable transportation, community violence, asthma and other chronic diseases, poor access to health care, unnecessary suspension for non-violent offenses, lack of engaging curriculum, child care or afterschool programming, foreclosures, etc.)
- ☐ If chronic absence is unusually low for a high risk population, find out what they are doing that works.



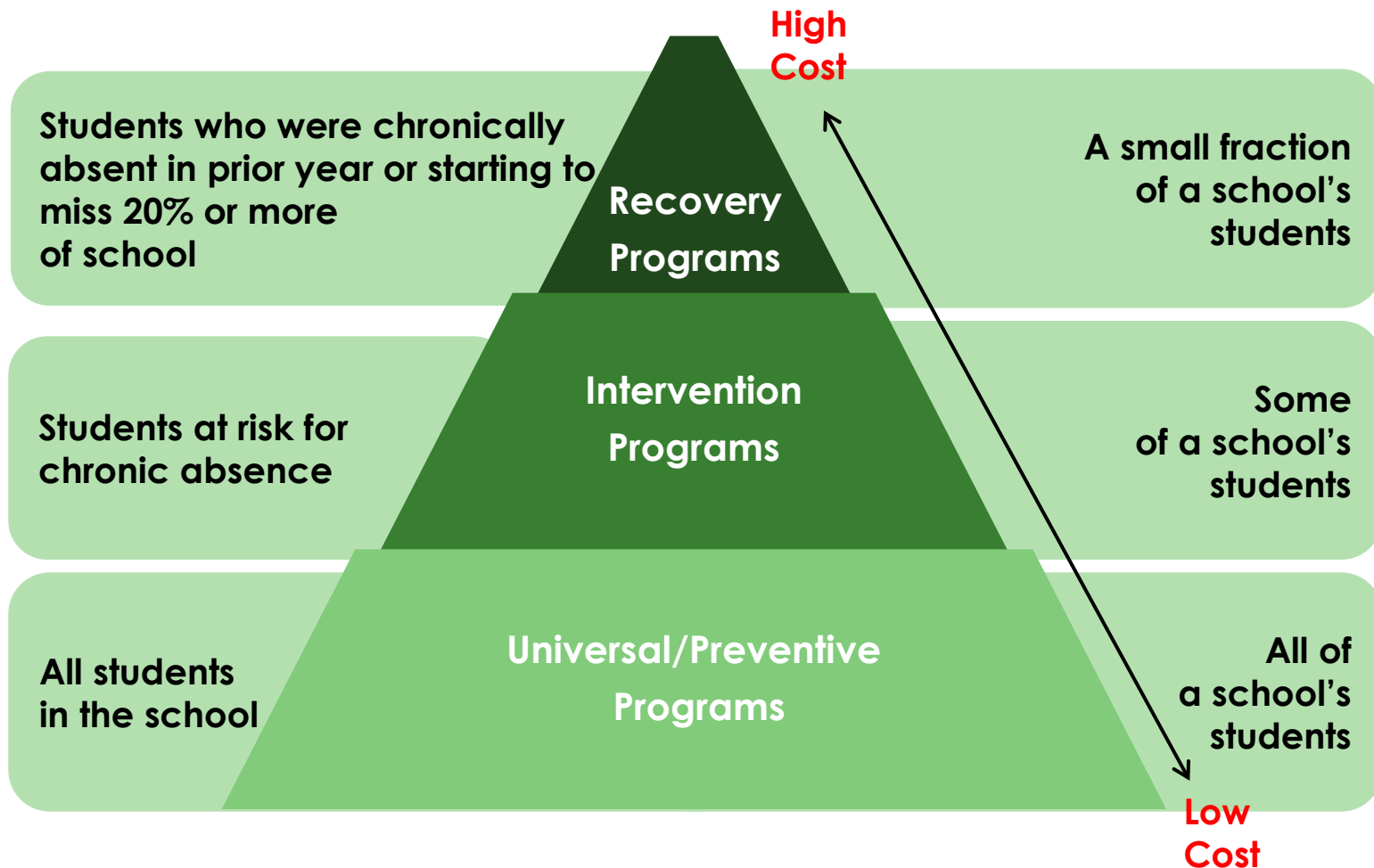
Schools + Communities CAN Make a Difference

Characteristics of Successful Attendance Initiatives

- ❑ Partner with community agencies to help parents carry out their responsibility to get children to school.
- ❑ Make attendance a priority, set targets and monitor progress over time.
- ❑ Examine factors contributing to chronic absence, especially from parent and student perspectives.
- ❑ Clearly communicate expectations to parents.
- ❑ Begin early, ideally in Pre-K.
- ❑ Combine universal strategies that create and engaged learning environment & build a culture of attendance with targeted interventions.
- ❑ Offer positive supports before punitive action.



Increased Attendance Involves a 3-Tiered Approach that Fits with Most Reform Efforts





What Causes Chronic Absence?

*Solutions Only Work If Grounded in Understanding Of
What Leads to Chronic Absence*

Discretion

Parents don't
know
attendance
matters

School lacks a
strong culture
of attendance

Aversion

Child is
struggling
academically

Child is being
bullied

Barriers

Lack of access
to health care

No safe path
to school

Poor
transportation

Special thanks to Dr. Robert Balfanz, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD for providing this framework.



Key Components of Effective Practice

Proposed Universal Strategies For Influencing Discretion and Identifying Causes of Absence

**Recognize Good
& Improved
Attendance**

**Parent
Engagement**

**Personalized
Early Outreach**

**Attendance
Data Team**



Strategies for 3 Tiered Approach

Recovery Programs

- Case management and wrap-around services
- Referral as last resort for court -based intervention

Intervention Programs

- Early outreach, support, mentoring for student with poor attendance.
- Identify and remove barriers
- Attendance contracts

Universal/Preventive Programs

- Safe & supportive school environment
- Engaging classroom environments
- Parent education about why attendance matters and how to help each other get students to school.
- On-going attention to attendance data
- Recognition for good and improved attendance
- Collaboration with afterschool & early childhood
- School-based health supports



Examples of Successful Efforts



Baltimore: Fewer unnecessary suspensions, reduced middle school transitions, expanded monitoring of attendance data, and a citywide campaign have **helped cut middle school chronic absence in half.**



Grand Rapids: A community schools approach including outreach and case management for students with poor attendance **has helped bring chronic absence down and student achievement up.**



New York City: Schoolwide incentives, celebrity wakeup calls and mentoring for at-risk students **have reduced elementary and middle school chronic absence in pilot schools.**

NYC Success Mentor Corps



300+ Success Mentors

reaching



**Over 3,000 At-Risk
Students**

- ✓ Full year, 3-5 days/week, 15 hour min.
- ✓ Trainings & check-ins
- ✓ Confidentiality agreements
- ✓ Weekly Principal Meetings
- ✓ Connections to services
- ✓ Data Dashboard

What is a Success Mentor?



- ◆ Success mentors are caring adults who work with chronically absent students to address the barriers keeping them from coming to school each day.



Success Mentor Responsibilities



1. Work with 15-20 Target Students
2. School-Wide Strategies to promote good attendance
3. Parental Engagement
4. Principals' Weekly Student Success Summits



Who are the NYC Success Mentors?



- ◆ City Year
- ◆ Retired professionals
- ◆ Social Work students supervised by CBOs
- ◆ School of Education students
- ◆ High school seniors
- ◆ School staff

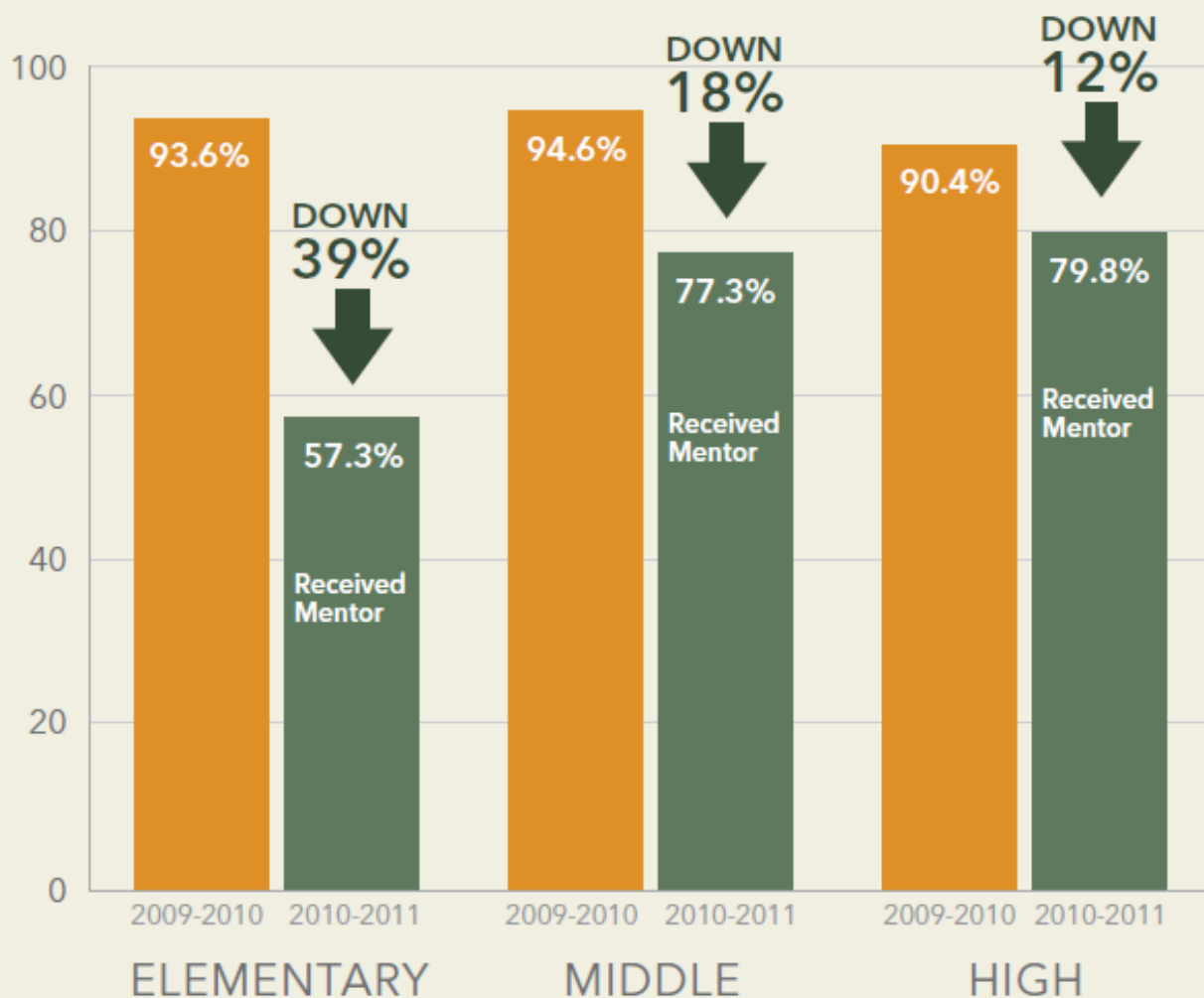


NYC SUCCESS MENTOR CORPS

Change in Chronic Absenteeism for Students with Mentors in 2010-11

*Annual Change in
Chronic Absenteeism
After Students Received
Full-Year Mentors
in 2010-11*

(1,400 Students with Mentors)





In Summary

Focus on Attendance Because:

Increased Student Absences are:

- An early warning sign of potential drop-outs
- Predictive of academic failure
- A flag for student disengagement and struggling schools
- Costly for each school and surrounding community

Measures of Attendance are:

- Available
- Easily understood
- Predictor of failure in school
- Indicator of effective engagement strategies by educators
- A potentially powerful shared outcome that facilitates collaboration

Discussion

